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Official Records

First Committee
20th meeting
Monday, 3 November 2003, 2.30 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Sareva ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 2.45 p.m.

Agenda items 62 to 80 (*continued*)

Action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: The First Committee will today continue to take decisions on the draft resolutions listed in informal working paper No. 5 — which was distributed to all delegations during the previous meeting — beginning with cluster 1, namely, "Nuclear weapons". However, we will not be able to take action on all draft resolutions contained in informal paper No. 5. Action on some draft resolutions has been postponed due to requests from the sponsors.

Therefore, after completing action on cluster 1 draft resolutions A/C.1/58/L.19, A/C.1/58/L.23 and A/C.1/58/L.47, the Committee will proceed to take a decision draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.46/Rev.1, which is under cluster 4. Thereafter the Committee will take up draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.27, which is under cluster 8. In other words, we will not be dealing with draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.11 and the amendment to it contained in document A/C.1/58/L.58; nor will we take action on draft resolutions A/C.1/58/L.39/Rev.1 and A/C.1/58/L.40/Rev.1, both of which are under cluster 1. We will also not take action on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.1/Rev.1, which is under cluster 4, or on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.25/Rev.1, which is under cluster 7. Finally, we will not take action today on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.26, which is under cluster 10.

Before the Committee proceeds to take decisions on the draft resolutions before it — beginning with draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.19, which is under cluster 1, namely, "Nuclear weapons" — I shall give the floor to delegations wishing to make general statements, other than explanations of vote, or to introduce revised draft resolutions.

Mr. Albin Santos (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The current international situation requires concrete and specific measures to address the threats we face. That is not a new assertion, but it has certainly taken on a new dimension in recent years. The objectives of disarmament, and of nuclear disarmament in particular, as well as disarmament as regards other weapons of mass destruction, are more relevant today than ever before.

With those goals in mind, at the beginning of the work of the First Committee, on 6 October, I announced the intention of the delegation of Mexico to propose during this session of the General Assembly the convening of a conference of signatories and States Parties to treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

In introducing draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.19, the delegation of Mexico sought to make a contribution in two areas. First, we sought to improve dialogue, cooperation and the exchange of experiences among countries and regions that have established nuclear-

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weapon-free zones, with the goal of achieving higher levels of coordination and of promoting the full implementation of those treaties and their protocols.

Secondly, we sought to make concrete progress in our collective disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation obligations, thereby making a positive contribution to the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In the course of the consultations held by the delegation of Mexico, it became clear that, in addition to the countries that have signed and ratified treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, the overwhelming majority of countries share the objectives contained in draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.19.

I regret to have to point out that, in the process of identifying and quantifying the financial implications of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.19, we have not enjoyed the timely support we would have desired from the Secretariat. I must also say that at all times the Secretariat listened with attention and interest to our proposals and questions. Nevertheless, we were still surprised at the lateness of its responses. In fact, it was not until 30 October 2003 that the Secretariat circulated, in document A/C.1/58/L.60, the costs associated with the holding of a conference on nuclear-weapon-free zones at United Nations Headquarters. The final figure is almost 30 per cent higher than the preliminary estimate we received informally on 21 October, which had served as the basis for consultations with our respective capitals. I must also acknowledge that the Secretariat had warned that the preliminary figures might be revised upwards, but we never imagined the magnitude of that increase.

Under the circumstances, and in spite of the broad support for the process contained in draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.19, we came to the conclusion that there is not enough time to conclude further consultations between the signatory and ratifying States of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties on alternative solutions to achieve the objectives proposed in the draft resolution. For those reasons, the Mexican delegation will not request the General Assembly to take a decision at this session on the text contained in draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.19.

The Chairman: If there are no other delegations wishing to make general statements or introduce revised draft resolutions, the First Committee will now proceed to take decisions on draft resolutions contained in cluster one, beginning with draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.23, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

Before doing so, I shall call upon those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote before the vote in a consolidated statement on the draft resolutions contained in cluster one.

I give the floor to those representatives wishing to speak in explanation of vote or position.

Mr. Bar (Israel): I would like to give an explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.23.

The First Committee is called upon to vote on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.23, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", a resolution that is patently one-sided, contentious and divisive and undermines rather than enhances confidence between the States of the region.

Since this draft resolution was first introduced, many alarming developments have occurred directly related to the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Some of those developments have only recently become apparent to the international community. In addition, other efforts are under way to acquire weapons of mass destruction and missile capabilities in the region, as our delegation pointed out during the general debate.

The bias of this draft resolution stems from its failure to recognize that the real risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East emanates from countries that, although parties to international treaties, do not comply with their relevant international obligations. Those countries are engaged in ongoing efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles — efforts that have a destabilizing effect not only at the regional level, but on a global scale as well.

The draft resolution chooses to ignore internationally acknowledged evidence that some States abuse arms control arrangements in order to obtain technology for military purposes. The draft resolution also overlooks the profound hostility of some States in the region towards Israel and their refusal to maintain any form of peaceful reconciliation or coexistence with it. Adopting a resolution that does not reflect those realities will not serve the greater objective of curbing nuclear proliferation in the Middle

East. Resolutions regarding the complex arms control problems in the Middle East should focus on objective ways to address them as they exist.

This draft resolution focuses entirely on one country that has never threatened its neighbours nor abrogated its obligations under any disarmament treaty. Moreover, it singles out Israel in a way that no other United Nations Member State is being singled out in the First Committee. Singling out Israel is both counterproductive to confidence-building and peace in the region and raises questions about the credibility of this body.

Israel's supreme objective is to achieve peace and security. Its non-proliferation and arms control policy is aimed at supporting that objective. The constructive approach adopted over the years by Israel towards arms control and non-proliferation efforts was described in our statement during the general debate. It is best demonstrated by our attitude on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, despite substantive reservations regarding its modalities, which is strongly undermined by the introduction of this biased draft resolution.

The unbalanced approach of the draft resolution has not been remedied by the reference it makes to the need for compliance by countries with their international obligations. Indeed, the fact that some countries consider the language of this draft resolution balanced is a source of deep disappointment to us.

The First Committee should not become a venue for political discrimination. We therefore call on all delegates to vote against this draft resolution.

Mr. Gala (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to make a statement in explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.47, "Nuclear disarmament".

The elimination of nuclear weapons continues to be the highest priority for the international community in the field of disarmament and my country has always supported initiatives aimed at the speedy attainment of that objective. In that regard, my delegation would like to recall that at the thirteenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Kuala Lumpur this year, profound concern was expressed at the slow pace of progress on nuclear disarmament.

Once again, Cuba will vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", because we believe it appropriately reflects the priority that should be attached to nuclear disarmament. We fully support the appeal to the Conference on Disarmament, contained in that text, that it establish a special committee on a priority basis at the beginning of 2004 to deal with nuclear disarmament and to begin negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament, leading to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the vote. The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.23.

A recorded vote has been requested.

We will first vote on the sixth preambular paragraph and thereafter on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.23 as a whole.

I now call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the vote on the sixth preambular paragraph.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.23, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the League of Arab States at the 14th meeting of the First Committee, on 23 October 2003.

The Committee will now first proceed to take action on the sixth preambular paragraph.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya,

Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

India, Israel

Abstaining:

Bhutan, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Micronesia (Federated States of), Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, Vanuatu

The sixth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.23 was retained by 142 votes to 2, with 11 abstentions.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.23 as a whole. I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.23 as a whole.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America

Abstaining:

Australia, Cameroon, Canada, Ethiopia, India, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu

Draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.23, as a whole, was adopted by 146 votes to 3, with 10 abstentions.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.47.

A recorded vote has been requested.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.47 entitled "Nuclear Disarmament".

This draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Myanmar, at the Committee's 15th meeting, on 24 October 2003. The sponsors of the draft resolution are contained in document A/C.1/58/L.47 and in document A/C.1/L.58/INF/2 and Add.3. In addition, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Benin, Samoa, Switzerland and Timor-Leste.

The Chairman: I recognize the representative of Switzerland, I presume on a point of order.

Mr. Halter (Switzerland): I just heard that Switzerland was newly listed as a sponsor to this draft resolution. I have to correct this, since this is — unfortunately for the rest of the sponsors — not the case.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Switzerland for that clarification and indeed, as far as I understand, the new sponsor is supposed to be Swaziland and not Switzerland.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, India, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritius, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Sweden, Ukraine

Draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.47 was adopted by 101 votes to 43, with 18 abstentions.

The Chairman: I now call on those delegations wishing to express themselves in explanation of vote after the vote.

Mr. Haitao Wu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation voted for draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.47, entitled "Nuclear Disarmament". China supports the objectives and the main thrust of this draft resolution and agrees with some of the important nuclear disarmament measures contained in it.

However, in the current international situation, it is premature to implement some specific nuclear disarmament measures set forth in this draft resolution. We are of the view that all nuclear disarmament measures, including interim steps, must follow the principle of maintaining global strategic stability and undiminished security for all countries.

Mr. Varma (India): We have requested the floor to set forth our positions on our votes on draft

resolutions contained in documents A/C.1/58/L.23 and L.47, after we have cast our votes. With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.23, we wish to state the following.

India abstained on this draft resolution as a whole and cast a negative vote on the sixth preambular paragraph, as it makes reference to the final document of the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held in the year 2000, on which India's position is well known.

Our position on the fifth preambular paragraph of this draft should also be seen in this light, even though we have not asked for a separate vote on that particular preambular paragraph. We believe that it is necessary to limit the focus of this draft resolution to the region that it intends to address, while noting the substantial contribution made by Egypt, the main sponsor of this draft resolution, to disarmament efforts, which we fully respect. India considers that the issues in this draft resolution have received wide-spread consideration in the international community and we hope that it will be possible to make progress on the issues involved in the coming years through positive contributions by the concerned States of the region.

I now turn to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament". India abstained on the draft resolution, "Nuclear disarmament", as contained in A/C.1/58/L.47. India has a long-standing and unwavering commitment to nuclear disarmament and the global elimination of nuclear weapons. We had, in fact, supported this draft resolution until the year 2000; however, the draft resolution has now moved in a direction, which includes elements on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, on which India's position is well known. Therefore, we have abstained on the draft resolution as a whole. This vote is, however, not a reflection on other elements of this draft resolution which we share with Myanmar and other sponsors as part of the long-standing Non-Aligned Movement and Group of 21 positions on nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): Canada wishes to explain its vote on the draft resolution in document A/C.1/58/L.23, "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

Canada has long supported the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and in this connection, has long called on India, Israel and Pakistan to accede to and abide by this Treaty. Canada supports the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, which called on all States not yet party to the Treaty to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States.

However, in our view, this draft resolution in its operative paragraphs fails to deal with our concerns respecting compliance with the NPT. Canada maintained its abstention on this draft resolution because, like last year's text, it fails to deal appropriately, in our view, with both adherence to and full compliance with the NPT.

Mr. Durrani (Pakistan): I have asked for the floor to express our support for the draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", as contained in document A/C.1/58/L.23.

My delegation would like to express our reservations on the sixth preambular paragraph, which calls for the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Pakistan is not a party to the NPT. As a State which possesses nuclear weapons, we cannot obviously accede to the NPT or accept these provisions in the draft resolution, as contained in document A/C.1/58/L.23.

Ms. Inoguchi (Japan): I have asked for the floor to explain Japan's abstention in voting on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament".

As I stated in my explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.31, concerning the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, it is Japan's fervent desire and firm conviction that the use of nuclear weapons should never be repeated, and that continuous efforts should be made towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

Having said that, as far as draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.47 is concerned, I would like to state the following: My delegation takes note of a number of positive elements concerning nuclear disarmament in this draft resolution. For example, it contains a reference to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a cornerstone for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. My delegation also appreciates that this draft resolution incorporates some of the steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference.

However, this draft resolution does not command the full support of my Government, and my delegation made the difficult choice of abstaining in the voting.

One of the reasons for this is that the draft resolution contains the element of a specified time frame for nuclear disarmament. My delegation firmly believes that the steps towards nuclear disarmament should be realistic and progressive, with the involvement of the nuclear-weapon States from the very beginning of the process.

Therefore, my delegation would prefer to see a different approach from that proposed in this draft resolution towards the shared goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Chairman: Are there any other delegations wishing to make an explanation of vote after the vote under cluster 1? I see none.

The Committee will therefore now proceed to take decision on the one draft resolution which we will be dealing with under cluster 4, namely, conventional weapons, document A/C.1/58/L.46/Rev.1.

Before we take action, I will call on those delegations wishing to make general statements or introduce revised draft resolutions under cluster 4.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): Activity on small arms and light weapons issues has been extensive and intensive in the past year. An important feature was the July 2003 First Biennial Meeting of States on the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted at the 2001 Conference. It is Canada's strong wish to see sustained progress at the national, regional and global levels on implementation of the Programme of Action. We have been very active in this regard working at all levels, and with a range of partners, to advance its implementation. We are committed to sustaining work on implementation of the Programme of Action, looking ahead to the next Biennial Meeting in 2005, and also to the 2006 Review Conference, which we hope will take us further on this important road.

In this regard, Canada strongly encourages work in regional organizations. For example, as a member of the Organization of American States, we are proud of the work on the small arms and light weapons issue that has been achieved by this organization. More generally, we have been supportive and frequently engaged in the small-arms-and-light-weapons-related work of organizations and subregional organizations in other regions.

Within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Canada has long been an advocate of developing far-reaching commitments as well as practical contributions with regard to the challenge of small arms and light weapons. We share with other members much satisfaction with the achievements, which began with the adoption of the important November 2000 OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The development of the best practice guides is a good example of such practical contributions. The best practice guides deal with a range of important topics: national marketing systems, national procedures for the control of manufacture, national export and import policy, national control of brokering activities, national procedures for stockpile management and security, definitions for indicators of a surplus, techniques and procedures for destruction, and small arms measures as part of disarmament demobilization and reintegration. We hope these best practice guides will find a wide audience, and prove of use to members of other regional and subregional organizations.

It remains our hope that the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms will continue to be carried out with the maximum unity of direction and purpose that has been the case to date in order to move closer to the shared goal of a world in which people no longer feel threatened by these weapons.

The Chairman: If there are no other delegations wishing to make general statements, the First Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.46/Rev.1.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor in explanation of the vote before the vote? There is none.

I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.46/Rev.1, entitled "Promotion at the regional level in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe of the United Nations programme of action on the illicit trade in small arms

and light weapons in all its aspects", which was introduced by the representative of France at the Committee's 13th meeting on 22 October 2003.

A list of the sponsors of the draft resolution are contained in document A/C.1/58/L.46/Rev.1 and in document A/C.1/58/INF/2 and Add.1-3. In addition, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Canada, Kyrgyzstan, Federated States of Micronesia, Sri Lanka and United States of America.

The Chairman: I thank the Secretary of the Committee for his statement.

The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.46/Rev.1 have expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.46/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman: I now call on those representatives who wish to explain their position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Kellerman (South Africa): The South African delegation wishes to place on record its position with respect to draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.46/Rev.1, "Promotion at the regional level in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe of the United Nations programme of action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects".

South Africa's policy on small arms, identifying the importance of regional approaches to address the problem of the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons, is based on regional concerns and practices an incremental approach. That approach reinforces national action and also ensures that, as each region of the world develops an indigenous approach, the building blocks to deal effectively with this issue globally are put in place.

South Africa, together with the other member States of the Southern African Development Community, has worked hard at the subregional level to, among other things, augment our national efforts to combat illicit small arms and light weapons by developing a regional, legally binding instrument on firearms. Other regions have also undertaken similar steps and launched important initiatives on small arms.

The United Nations programme of action represents the consensus view of the international community on the action to be undertaken at the national, regional and international levels to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. The successful conclusion of the First Biennial Meeting of States to consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action demonstrated the commitment by States and non-governmental organizations to implement the Programme of Action. Progress has been made on the national implementation of the Programme of Action and we are at the threshold of initiating important progress on the international implementation of the action Programme. The First Biennial Meeting of States was also briefed on and discussed important regional initiatives on small arms.

The draft resolution submitted by Colombia, Japan and South Africa on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects (A/C.1/58/L.1) has operationalized the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels on a consensus basis. Without prejudice to individual or collective efforts being undertaken at the national, regional or international level on small arms, it calls for the early and full implementation of the Programme of Action, recognizes initiatives, and calls for the mobilization of resources to promote its implementation.

Member States, as well as the Chair of the First Committee, have also expressed views on the working methodology of this Committee. South Africa supports the view that we should carefully evaluate our work so as to ensure that we avoid the duplication of draft resolutions that deal with the same issue. South Africa's strong commitment to regional approaches on small arms is therefore encapsulated within the Programme of Action. South Africa believes that the Programme of Action should be implemented comprehensively and that its implementation should not be divided up in different draft resolutions with divergent priorities and initiatives being emphasized. Such an approach would retard, rather than advance, its implementation.

Mr. Gala (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): In connection with draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.46/Rev.1

just adopted without a vote, my delegation would like to make the following statement.

While we do recognize that the text adopted contains favourable amendments vis-a-vis the original version, in our opinion the relevance of the draft resolution is not clear, given the existence of draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.1, which, in a more general context and using consensus language, addresses the subject of combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. In fact, that draft resolution contains a preambular paragraph that notes with satisfaction the regional efforts that are being undertaken in support of implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action adopted in 2001.

We see no reason to single out the best practices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Moreover, any attempt to universalize such practices should not lose sight of the fact that every region has its own characteristics and specificities. Other regions and subregions might feel entitled to submit a draft resolution along the same lines, which would run counter to the objective of rationalizing the number of draft resolutions submitted in the First Committee — a measure that is staunchly defended by some of the countries sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.46/Rev.1.

Any regional group has the right to circulate an official document in order to disseminate or publicize its experiences in this field, but that is no reason for the General Assembly to validate or standardize those experiences through the adoption of a resolution.

Mr. Mammedaliyev (Azerbaijan): I have asked for the floor to explain our vote after the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.46/Rev.1.

Azerbaijan has joined the consensus on the draft resolution because we support its main thrust, values and objectives. Azerbaijan fully shares the international community's stand that illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons represents a grave threat to security and stability. Easy access to small arms, coupled with their damaging capacity, makes them a serious challenge that the international community faces in the new millennium.

At the regional level, Azerbaijan makes every effort to strengthen cooperation with regional States to jointly tackle every kind of illicit trafficking. In particular, Azerbaijan has engaged in such cooperation within the multilateral framework of the GUUAM countries — Georgia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova. We are convinced that increased transparency in small arms sales will significantly contribute to the security and stability of the member States of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

However, the present draft resolution seems to be difficult to implement at the sub-regional level in the South Caucasus because of a number of armed conflicts in the area, in particular the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In this regard, Azerbaijan has repeatedly drawn the attention of the international community to the illegal transfers of huge amounts of weaponry, including small arms and light weapons, to Armenia. Various types of conventional weapons continue to be deployed and stockpiled in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The occupation of territories, terrorist activities, arms and drug smuggling and human trafficking in the territories controlled by separatists and foreign military presences hamper the independent development of the three States of the region. Our delegation would like to emphasize that Azerbaijan regards regional political and economic cooperation with Armenia to be possible only after a settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, based on full respect of our sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr. Issa (Egypt): Very briefly, the delegation of Egypt, while it did have problems with the initial version of the draft resolution that was circulated, wishes to commend the spirit in which the delegation of France anticipated and conducted its consultations, in a manner that made it possible for us to join consensus on this draft resolution. We also wish to convey our thanks to the representative of France, Mr. François Rivasseau for the manner in which he conducted his consultations, leading us to the current positive result on this draft resolution.

Mr. Varma (India): India has joined the consensus on draft resolution L.46/Rev.1 and we would like to compliment the delegation of France and other sponsors of this draft resolution in bringing forth the important regional element, which is an essential component of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

We, too, are satisfied with the process of consultation and the changes that have been brought forth and reflected in the revised draft. India has already contributed and will continue to contribute to maintaining the international momentum that has been generated for a timely and effective implementation of the Programme of Action. In addressing regional elements and aspects of this Programme, we feel it is important to take into account regional specificities on the basis of arrangements that meet the interests of the States of the region or the subregion concerned.

The Chairman: Are there any further requests for the floor in terms of explanation of vote? I see none.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on one draft resolution under cluster 8, "Other disarmament measures", namely document A/C.1/58/L.27.

Before taking acton, I give the floor to those delegations wishing to make general statements or to introduce revisions. I see none.

Are there any delegations wishing to express themselves in explanation of vote or position before action is taken? I see none.

The Committee will therefore now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.27.

A recorded vote has been requested.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will proceed to take action on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.27, entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control".

This draft resolution was introduced by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement at the Committee's fourteenth meeting on 23 October 2003. The sponsors of the draft resolution are contained in document A/C.1/58/INF/2.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

United States of America

Abstaining:

France, Israel, Micronesia (Federated States of), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.27 was adopted by 156 votes to 1, with 4 abstentions.

The Chairman: I will now give the floor to those delegations wishing to make an explanation of vote after the vote.

Mr. McGinnis (United States of America): The United States has previously made clear in this Committee that it sees no direct connection between general environmental standards and multilateral arms control agreements. We also remain unconvinced that this draft resolution is relevant to the work of the First Committee.

Nevertheless, in the past, we have abstained on this draft resolution. The United States believes that States parties to bilateral, regional or multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements should take relevant environmental concerns into account when implementing such agreements. The United States Government operates under stringent domestic activities, including the implementation of arms control and disarmament agreements.

Concern for the environment, however, should not lead us to overburden the crucial negotiation phase of crafting an agreement. Such agreements are difficult enough to negotiate without having to take into account factors that are not relevant to their central purpose. In addition, it should not be the role of the United Nations to attempt to set standards for the content of arms control and disarmament agreements.

It is up to the parties to such agreements to choose the provisions by which they are willing to be bound.

This draft resolution has not changed in the last three General Assembly sessions. That suggests to us that draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.27/Rev.1 and its predecessors have not generated progress towards resolving the issues its sponsors wish to address. For this reason and because of our continuing reservations about the appropriateness and utility of this draft resolution, the United States this year has voted "no".

The Chairman: Are there other delegations wishing to make an explanation of vote after the vote? I see none.

I will now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan for a general statement.

Mr. Umer (Pakistan): I have taken the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/58/L.18/Rev.1, which I understand will be acted on tomorrow.

You would recall that I had introduced the original version of this draft resolution about two weeks ago. At that time we had indicated that we will continue to engage in consultations with all interested parties in order to ensure that this draft resolution, which is an important initiative, enjoys the maximum possible support of this Committee. We conducted those consultations, including one open-ended session, and following those wide-ranging exchanges, we have issued a revised text contained in document A/C.1/58/L.18/Rev.1. I ask you to bear with me, Sir, to take you through the changes we have introduced in the revised text, in response to the concerns which were expressed by a number of delegations.

In the sixth preambular paragraph, we have brought in the concept of "States concerned". Originally we talked about "dialogue in the regions of tension to avert conflict", but we were advised that such a dialogue has to take place among States. We therefore brought in the concept of States conducting dialogue in the sixth, seventh and eighth preambular paragraphs in order to respond to specific concerns raised by some delegations.

In the operative part of the draft we have made some significant changes. In operative paragraph 1, which refers to non-use of force — a Charter principle — we were reminded that force is allowed under certain circumstances, which we accept. Under Article 51 of the Charter, the use of force is authorized strictly in self-defence. We therefore supplemented the original paragraph 1 by a reference to "the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter". In our assessment, that should adequately take care of any concern with regard to that concept.

In operative paragraph 4, we have also made a significant change. The original draft resolution referred to "compliance with bilateral, regional and international arms control and disarmament agreements". But we were advised that this was not enough and that compliance should be ensured in respect of all types of agreements. We acceded to that request and have now called for strict compliance "with all bilateral, regional and international agreements, including arms control and disarmament

agreements". We hope that this modification will take care of any anxiety on that score.

We heard a lot of views in respect of operative paragraph 5, which encapsulates a very important principle of military balance. We were advised that the original paragraph gave the impression that balance could mean armament, that a State can try to achieve balance, not through disarmament, but by the acquisition of armaments. We have therefore changed that paragraph altogether. Now there is a very clear reference to "the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments", which is a recognized internationally accepted concept, consecrated in various resolutions of the General Assembly, as well as the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Continuing with our description of revisions to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/58/L.18, we were advised that in operative paragraph 6 of the original version, in addition to bilateral and regional confidence-building measures, there could be unilateral measures as well. We accepted the logic of that argument and have included the term "unilateral" in operative paragraph 6.

Finally, operative paragraph 7 of the draft was the subject of a number of démarches to our delegation. The substance of those démarches was that the original draft gave a role to the Secretary-General which, it was felt, was too intrusive. We had asked the Secretary-General to consult with Member States. But a view was expressed that even that was a bit too intrusive. Even though we are not personally convinced of this point of view, we have changed the entire structure of operative paragraph 7 simply to achieve maximum possible consensus on this draft resolution. Now, instead of consulting or doing anything else, the Secretary-General has been asked to conduct a routine exercise which we keep entrusting to him, that is "to seek the views of Member States" in order to explore further possibilities of promoting confidence-building measures.

Having demonstrated maximum possible flexibility, Pakistan hopes that when this revised draft is put to a vote tomorrow the same flexibility would be forthcoming from those delegations whose views have been specifically included in this text.

The Chairman: Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to inform you that at its next meeting, tomorrow afternoon, the Committee will continue to take action on the remaining draft resolutions as contained in informal working paper No. 6, which has just been circulated to you.

The draft resolutions that the Committee will act upon tomorrow are, as indicated by informal paper No. 6, as follows: under cluster 1, nuclear weapons, A/C.1/58/L.11, and the amendment to it in A/C.1/58/L.58, as well as A/C.1/58/L.39/Rev.1 and A/C.1/58/L.40/Rev.1. Under cluster 4, conventional weapons, we will take action on A/C.1/58/L.1/Rev.1 and under cluster 6, confidence-building measures, including transparency in armaments, we will take action on A/C.1/58/L.18/Rev.1 and A/C.1/58/L.54/Rev.1.

We will thereafter proceed to cluster 7, disarmament machinery, and take action on A/C.1/58/L.25/Rev.1. Finally, under cluster 10, international security, we will take action on A/C.1/58/L.26.

Delegates, you may have noted by now that if we are indeed able to take action on all eight draft resolutions contained in informal paper No. 6 tomorrow, we will have taken action on 53 out of 54 of the draft resolutions on our agenda. The one remaining draft is contained in document A/C.1/58/L.15.

Of course, I hope that tomorrow we will be faced with a serendipitous situation and be in a position to deal with that remaining draft as well. I certainly hope that this list of draft resolutions to be acted upon will stand tomorrow.

Are there any delegations wishing to take the floor under any other business at this stage? I see none.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.